

Useful Aids for the Local Historian

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IN pursuit of its primary purpose, the fostering of the study of local history as part of the common heritage of all, the Standing Conference for Local History has planned its LOCAL HISTORY SERIES of brief, simple and cheap pamphlets, compiled with the help of some of our best scholars and bibliographers, and designed to assist anyone interested in local history, whether he merely wants to know the best book on his own locality or proposes to write the history of his parish or town or to study any other of the many varied aspects of local history. Despite present difficulties publication has been rapid, and already the series is becoming increasingly valuable as each new title reveals another element in the whole design. Ordinary readers for pleasure or personal interest, beginners in the art of writing local history anxious to make the best use of limited time and needing to discover quickly the best books and the likeliest sources of unpublished material, adult classes studying the technique of local history under the guidance of trained tutors, and even historians of experience and standing, will all find help increasingly from this steadily developing plan.

A PLAN FOR THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY (No. 1, April 1949, 11 pp., 6d.) describes the aims of the Standing Conference and its project of promoting the formation of County Committees to co-ordinate the efforts of all organisations working on or interested in the study of any aspect of local history, and shows how such committees can advance both the study and the writing of local history. THE COMPILATION OF COUNTY BIBLIOGRAPHIES (No. 2, December 1948, 8 pp., 6d.) sets out a simple but comprehensive outline plan for listing all printed books and articles which might be used for the study of the history of any country, town or village. A SELECTION OF BOOKS ON ENGLISH LOCAL HISTORY (No. 3, February 1949, 16 pp., 9d.) the most useful title so far, offers a carefully chosen list of books which would help any student of local history, and would prove especially useful for beginners working either individually or in groups. Part I is a short list of general biographies, reference books, and books on research technique in local history generally: part II lists, county by county anything from four to fifteen of the most important books on each county and its principal towns. A DIRECTORY OF AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF LOCAL HISTORIANS (No. 4, March 1950, 11 pp., 6d.) is a helpful and practical list of such national organisations as are wholly or partly engaged in

local history work, government departments and other bodies working in fields related to local history, local government associations, county local history committees, and county archivists. NOTES ON THE RECORDING OF LOCAL HISTORY (No. 5, December 1950, 8 pp., 6d.) makes generally available a useful practical device which has been successfully employed in Berkshire, a model record form, with notes for use, for recording local history data. LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITIONS (No. 6, March 1951, 12 pp., 9d.) is a strictly practical account of what can be attempted and achieved by a village history exhibition, and how it can best be organised: based on much direct experience, it should enable enthusiastic organisers to tap resources and to avoid pitfalls which they might not have imagined to exist until they read this leaflet.

The Conference has also in hand pamphlets on HOW TO WRITE A PARISH GUIDE (a much-needed lead in a popular field), an illustrated pamphlet on ROYAL ARMS IN CHURCHES, and others on THE LOCAL HISTORIAN AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (the first of a sub-series dealing separately with each century), on METHODS OF TEACHING LOCAL HISTORY IN SCHOOLS, and on THE RECOGNITION AND REPORTING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES (prepared jointly with the Council for British Archaeology). The authority with which each pamphlet is written or compiled, the simplicity of both language and plan, and the low price of the pamphlets should make them very useful in the spreading of sound standards over a wide field in the study of local history.

Copies of any of the above pamphlets and information about the wider services of the Standing Conference, may be obtained from the Secretary, The Standing Conference for Local History, 26, Bedford Square, London W.C.1.

